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The use of temperature averages

L. P. Smith

Averages have two main purposes:-

To provide a synopsis of past weather
To provide a possible basis for extrapolation in time.

The present published (M.O. 735) temperature averages present a particular problem in regard to the second of these purposes.

The Appendix shows the 30 year averages for Oxford in 5 periods since 1820, plus the present 'normals' (1931-1960), the longest term (1815-1969) averages, and averages for the last decade (1960-1969).

The disquieting fact is that the published averages are the highest of all the 30 year periods for 7 out of the 12 months of the year (including all summer months).

Recent decadal peaks of warmth were reached in the various months as follows:

January	1920-29	April	1940-49	July	1940-49
February	1920-29	May	1940-49	August	1930-39
March	1930-39	June	1930-39	September	1940-49
				October	1960-69
				November	1930-39
				December	1950-59

Prudence would therefore suggest that the use of the current averages 1931-1960, should be tempered with caution against over estimation as far as temperature is concered.

/Appendix

Appendix

OXFORD	1820-1849	1850-1879	1880-1909	1910-1939	1940-1969	1931-1960 [M.O.735]	1815-1969	1960-1969
March	43.1	42.2	42.2	43.2	43.3	43.5	42.8	43.2
April	47.4	47.9	46.9	46.9	48.6	48.4	47.5	48.1
May	53.9	52.4	52.7	54.0	53.6	53.6	53.3	53.5
SPRING	48.5	47.5	47.3	48.0	48.5	48.5	47.9	48.3
June	59.4	58.9	58.4	58.8	59.3	59.6	59.0	59.5
July	61.4	62.1	61.9	61.9	62.5	62.8	61.9	61.5
August	61.1	61.4	60.9	61.6	61.7	62.4	61.3	60.8
SUMMER	60.6	60.8	60.4	60.8	61.2	61.6	60.7	60.6
September	56.8	56.8	56.9	57.3	57.9	57.9	57.1	57.6
October	50.6	50.4	49.3	50.2	51.5	50.9	50.4	52.5
November	44.2	43.3	43.4	43.6	44.2	44.6	43.7	43.8
AUTUMN	50.5	50.2	49.9	50.4	50.9	51.1	50.4	51.3
December	40.5	39.9	39.4	40.8	40.2	40.8	40.1	39.1
January	37.6	39.3	38.5	40.4	38.1	38.7	38.8	38.4
February	39.8	40.4	39.7	41.1	39.8	39.6	40.0	39.4
WINTER	39.3	39.9	39.2	40.8	39.4	39.7	39.6	39.0
YEAR	49.7	49.6	49.2	50.0	50.1	50.2	49.7	49.8

The underlined averages are the highest of the 30 year averages.

Any comments or suggestions on this paper should be referred to the author.

Meteorological Office
Bracknell
Berkshire

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